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# THE MALT-TAX

KEPT UPON THE BACKS OF THE PEOPLE BY THE WHIGS.

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*Normandy, 16. March, 1835.*

OPPRESSED WORKING PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,

You have always heard me say, that the faction called THE WHIGS have been the great destroyers of the liberties and the happiness of the people of England; and I have now to produce to you the proof, the clear proof, that this faction has by no means changed its character; but that it is still the great destroyer of those liberties and of that happiness. In the most clear and elaborate manner I have proved, that the malt-tax costs the people of England from eleven to thirteen millions of pounds sterling a year. Those of you who live in the country know all the monstrous mischiefs that it produces amongst the persons employed in agriculture; you know that it is one great cause of driving the married man from his home to the beer-houses; that it is one great cause of driving the young people from service in husbandry

in the farm-houses; that it is the greatest of all the causes of those offences which fill the jails all over the kingdom, with men who ought to be at work; that it is monstrously injurious to the occupier of land by preventing him from turning his barley to the account of feeding horses and cattle, in the half-malted or whole malted form: you know well that if this monstrous tax were repealed, the change would go far towards that revival of agriculture, without which no branch of industry can long flourish, and without which there must arise a state of things to menace the existence of every one of the existing ancient institutions of the country. It was, therefore, above all things, desirable, that this tax should be repealed; and a motion was made for this purpose, in the House of Commons, on Tuesday the 10th of this month of March, by the MARQUIS OF CHANDOS, who is one of the members for the county of BUCKINGHAM. After a long debate the House

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divided; about one o'clock in the morning, when there appeared

For the repeal..... 192

Against the repeal.. 350

Majority..... 158

Now, my friends, it is for you to be informed, and to recollect, that this decision, so injurious to the people, was occasioned by the WHIGS JOINING THE MINISTER, IN OPPOSITION TO THE REPEAL! This is a thing for you *never to forget*. Here was an opportunity for giving effectual relief to the working millions of England and Wales particularly; and to those of Ireland and Scotland, in a very great degree. Here was no "*revolution*" called for; no *innovation* called for, by the people; no proposal to pull down, or tear to pieces, any "*ancient institution*"; but merely to repeal an act of Parliament, cruelly injurious to the millions of this nation. It was now, therefore, that these Whigs, who have been so loudly calling out against *Tory-tyranny*; and who have been getting together crowds of silly people, to utter resolutions against the King himself, because he turned the Whigs out of place; it was now for these Whigs to show, that they had some feeling for the people, they having it completely in their power to compel the Tory-minister to give up the tax. By prevailing upon the real friends of the people to join them, they *had obtained two triumphant majorities over the Tory-minister*; those same majorities were *at their command* now for the repeal of this tax; but

those majorities they employed from their own selfish hopes of driving him from his place, and *getting into that place themselves*. The present was quite another matter; if this tax were repealed, they would have many millions less to handle if they got into place; and therefore, with a degree of earnestness, of anxiety, and of bitterness, hardly describable, THEY OPPOSED THE REPEAL OF THIS TAX; and thereby made good all the accusations that I have ever preferred against them during the thirty years that I have been engaged, in great part of my time, in exposing the greediness, the hard-heartedness, and all the hateful qualities of this depraved political faction.

Lists of the NAMES of those who voted in the majority and in the minority have been published in some of the newspapers; but these lists not having been published in a manner sufficiently correct for me to rely upon, I can give only the NUMBERS; but I can at the same time assert that one hundred and one of those persons who notoriously belong to the Whig-faction, and who voted against the repeal on this occasion. If they had voted for the repeal, instead of against it, there would have been for the repeal *two hundred and ninety-three*; against it, *two hundred and forty-nine*; and of course there would have been a majority for the repeal of *forty-four*. Therefore, my friends, remember, that this decision against the industrious classes of the community has been occasioned *solely by the faction called the Whigs*; a fact which ought to be recollected

by every honest and sensible man in the kingdom. I shall, doubtless, obtain hereafter a correct list of the names, both of the majority and the minority; but it is quite sufficient for us to know, that the principal speakers against the repeal, the most loud, the most vehement, the most strenuous, in every respect, were, Mr. WOOD, late Whig Secretary of the Treasury, Member for HALIFAX, and son-in-law of Lord GREY; Mr. SPRING RICE, a Whig Secretary of State, and Mr. POULETT THOMSON, Whig President of the Board of Trade. I know, also, that Lord JOHN RUSSELL (the now-leader of the Whigs, and late Whig paymaster of the forces); that Mr. LITTLETON, the Whig Secretary for Ireland; that Sir JOHN CAMPBELL, the Whig Attorney-general; that Sir JAMES GRAHAM, the Whig First Lord of the Admiralty; that Lord EBRINGTON, who is regarded as the grandfather, father, and godfather of the Whigs; that Lord MORPETH, the mover of the Whig amendment to the Address; that Lord HOWICK, son of Lord GREY, and a Whig Under-Secretary of State: I know that *all these voted against the repeal of the malt-tax*; and that they were accompanied in their vote by all the underlings that had belonged to their administration. What base men must those be, then, who would make us believe that *the King has done wrong*, in turning out this faction; and what *foolish* men must those real friends of the people have been, who voted with them, in order to give them their two majorities over the Tory Minister! Those

two majorities would have turned the Tory Minister out of his place; but he knew well, that the moment the repeal of the malt-tax was proposed, he might object to it, if he liked; that he was sure, in such a case, to have these Whigs at his back; and that, *after that*, no man of common sense would ever stir hand, foot, or tongue, to turn him out, and to put those Whigs in his place. Events have already verified his opinion. The Whigs threatened *to stop the Supplies*. Mr. HUME, taking them to be sincere, gave notice of a motion to that effect, for Friday last; but he discovered *that the majority was gone!* The friends of the people, who had supported the Whigs, and given them their majority, were not such wretched fools as to give them another majority after their conduct on the malt-tax; and there they now are, a faction without the smallest degree of power, acting towards the Tories just the part that the Tories acted towards them before!

It is a curious fact, and one that you ought to hear in mind, that this odious and most cruel tax was *first laid on by the Whigs*, in the year 1701, to support the Whig king, whom they had brought from Holland; but that, so strenuous were the efforts of the Tories against the Whig-faction, they would not suffer the tax to be granted except *for a year*; besides which permission was retained for private persons to make malt for the consumption of their own families, by compounding at a very moderate rate. This was a great mitigation of the seve-

city; because then the farmer prevented that destruction of his barley, which now takes place for want of the same power; and it enabled him to give beer in plenty to his family, and to his working men. This permission continued until the year 1783; when, at the close of the American war, the DEADLY WHIGS got into power again; and then they took away this permission, having discovered at the end of *eighty-three years*, that the permission was *not a proper thing*! From that day to this places of public resort for drinking have increased twenty-fold; and

all the crimes and miseries attendant on the haunting of such places have gone on prodigiously increasing. The farmer could not *sell* his malt; could not *barter* it; could not give it *in payment* for labour, to be carried away in malt from his house; but he could hrew abundantly for his people, at his house, and in his fields. His beer, which came to him so cheap, formed part of his means of carrying on his farm, and a large part of those means too: it caused plenty of good drink to be always in the farm-house; and was one great cause of that harmony amongst landlords, farmers, and labourers, which existed fifty years ago. In a fatal hour for England, the ALL-DESTROYING WHIGS got possession of the fiscal powers again; and by the Act 23rd George the Third, chapter 64, they laid the foundation of all the misery, all the crimes, all the hostile and deadly feeling of the poor towards the rich, which now disfigure and disgrace this once most admirably happy agricultural community. Townspeople then

used to go to the country, in order to be sure to meet with good ale and strong beer at farm-houses. Now all has been swept away by this ruthless faction; and we see, in the instance before us, that length of time, prosperity, adversity, public danger, even to themselves; that nothing can change the nature of this faction; but that, like the serpent, it hands down its poison from generation to generation.

At last, however, after this vote on the malt-tax, it has become **ASHAMED OF ITS NAME**. Its vile hireling newspapers

in London have dropped the use of the word "WHIG"; and have given to the faction the name of "REFORMERS"! Curious reformers, to vote against the repeal of the malt-tax. However, I have here said quite enough to show you who it is that has defeated us upon this occasion; and with this knowledge in your minds you will, I trust, not in future be easily deceived by the hirelings of this faction; and having done this, I have only to add my hope, that every friend of mine will give as wide a circulation as possible to this little paper. And I remain your friend and most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

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**LEGACY TO LABOURERS,**

OR,

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